Our Case No. 9623/334

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:	)
	)
Davis et al.	) Examiner: *not yet assigned*
	)
Serial No. *not yet assigned*	) *Examiner of parent: C. Nguyen*
	)
Serial No. of parent 09/322,677	) Group Art Unit No.: *not yet assigned*
	)
Filing Date: July 23, 2001	) *Group Art Unit No.: of parent 2165*
	)
For SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR	)
INFLUENCING A POSITION ON A	)
SEARCH RESULT LIST	)
GENERATED BY A COMPUTER	
NETWORK SEARCH ENGINE	

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

This is a continuation application claiming priority of application serial number 08/322, 677, filed May 28, 1999. Prior to calculation of the filing fee, entry of the following preliminary amendment is requested.

Please amend the application as indicated below.

IN THE DRAWING:

Please substitute the enclosed 9 sheets of formal drawings for the informal drawings filed with the parent application.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 1, prior to the first line of the application, please insert

--CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of application serial number 08/322,677, filed May 28, 1999, now U.S. patent number 6,269,361, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.--

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-68.

Please add new claims 69-135 as indicated below:

69. (New) A method of operating a pay for placement web site, the method comprising:

receiving a bidded search term from a web site operator;

generating a list of additional related search terms; and

receiving an indication of additional bidded search terms from the web site
operator.

70. (New) The method of claim 69 wherein generating the list of additional related search terms comprises providing one or more previously-bid search terms to assist the web site operator in locating search terms relevant to content of a web site of the web site operator.

71. (New) The method of claim 69 wherein generating the list of additional search terms comprises applying a string matching algorithm to a database of bidded search terms to identify additional related search terms.

72. (New) The method of claim 69 wherein generating the list of additional related search terms comprises comparing the bidded search term with a thesaurus database to identify additional search terms.

73. (New) A method of operating a pay for placement web site, the method comprising:

receiving a bidded search term from a web site operator;

removing predetermined common irregularities from the bidded search term to produce a canonicalized search term;

receiving a search request from a searcher;

removing predetermined common irregularities from the search request to produce a canonicalized search request; and

comparing the canonicalized search request with search listings including the canonicalized search term; and

producing as search results search listings generating a match with the canonicalized search term.

74. (New) The method of claim 73 further comprising:

generating a match between the search term and a search listing when key words of the search listing and the search term have the same root but are different words.

75. (New) The method of claim 73 further comprising:

determining synonyms of the search term using a thesaurus database;

generating a match between the search term and a search listing when a synonym of the search term matches a search listing.

76. (New) A method of operating a pay for placement web site, the method comprising:

maintaining a database including a plurality of search listings for searching by remotely-located searchers, each search listing being associated with an

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Internet website, a search term and a bid amount, the bid amount being

specific to the search term and corresponding to a money amount payable

by a web site promoter each time a searcher selects the search listing

from a list of search results;

receiving a search request from the searcher;

identifying search listings generating a match with the search request;

ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with

the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings;

adding to the search result list search listings associated with non-bid Internet

websites;

receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to retrieve information associated

with a selected search listing in the search result list; and

when the selected search listing is from the database, recording account

identification information for debiting an account of a web site promoter

associated with the selected search listing by an amount corresponding to

the bid amount for the selected search listing.

77. (New) The method of claim 76 further comprising:

generating a list of one or more non-paid Internet web site descriptions for

inclusion in the search result list.

78. (New) The method of claim 77 wherein generating the list comprises using a

mathematics-based database search algorithm on a database of web site information.

79. (New) A search engine method comprising:

providing menu options for access by a web site promoter;

receiving from the web site promoter information for a search listing, including

receiving a search term,

receiving a uniform resource locator (URL) address associated with a web

site of the web site promoter, and

receiving a bid amount chargeable to an account of the web site promoter;

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storing the information for the search listing in the database; and

subsequently, providing computer network access for monitoring of the data base
by the web site promoter.

80. (New) The method of claim 79 further comprising:

automatically sending an indication of account status to the web site promoter in
response to a predetermined condition.

81. (New) The method of claim 80 further comprising:

sending an electronic mail message to the web site promoter to advise the web
site promoter of the predetermined condition.

82. (New) The method of claim 80 wherein sending an indication comprises
sending to the web site promoter a warning to replenish the account before the account
is suspended.

83. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein receiving the information for a
search listing further comprises:

receiving a web site description for the web site.

84. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein providing menu options comprises:

providing an option to add to a balance in the account; and

providing an option to view a transaction history for the account.

85. (New) A search result list display produced in response to receipt of a
search term query, the search result list display comprising:

a plurality of paid search listings, each paid search listing determined to have a
match with the search term query and including:

descriptive information for a web site associated with the respective paid
search listing, and

a hyperlink associated with the respective paid search listing; and

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one or more unpaid search listings.

86. (New) The search result list display of claim 85 wherein the each paid listing further includes:

a uniform resource locator associated with the respective paid search listing,

a rank value associated with the respective paid search listing, and

an advertiser's bid amount associated with the respective paid search listing.

87. (New) The search result list display of claim 86 wherein each unpaid search listing comprises:

a uniform resource locator associated with the respective unpaid search listing, and

text describing content of a web site associated with the respective unpaid search listing.

88. (New) The search result list display of claim 85 wherein the one or more unpaid search listings comprise a number of unpaid search listings sufficient to complete a display page of the search result display after display of the plurality of paid search listings.

89. (New) The search result list display of claim 85 wherein the plurality of paid search listings comprise search listings selected according to a search query from a database of search listing records pairing search terms and bids specified by advertisers and wherein the one or more unpaid search listings comprise search listings selected from a database and not associated with bids.

90. (New) The search result list display of claim 85 wherein the descriptive information for a web site comprises one or more of:

a title associated with the web site; and

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text describing content of the web site.

91. (New) A method for operating a database search system, the method comprising:

receiving a request from an advertiser to change one or more bids associated with search listings stored in a search database, each search listing including a search term and a bid chargeable to the advertiser upon receipt of a click through by a searcher presented with search results including the search listing, the search results displayed to the searcher according to a display rank following receipt of a search query including the search term;

receiving a new bid amount for one or more search listings;

determining new current bid amounts for the one or more search listings;

determining display rank values for the one or more search listings;

determining a bid amount needed to become the highest ranked search listing associated with the search term of the one or more search listings; and

displaying search listing information of the advertiser.

92. (New) The method of claim 91 further comprising:

displaying data associated with the one or more search listings in a tabular format.

93 (New) The method of claim 92 further comprising:

displaying data associated with respective search listings in respective rows of a table;

displaying search terms of the respective search listings in a first column of the table;

displaying a current bid amount of the respective search listings in a second column of the table;

displaying a current rank of the respective search listings in a third column of the table; and

displaying a current bid amount needed to become the highest ranked search

listing of the respective search listings in a fourth column of the table.

94 (New) The method of claim 93 further comprising:

displaying a new bid input field in a fifth column of the table.

95 (New) The method of claim 94 wherein receiving a new bid amount comprises detecting data entered by the advertiser in the new bid input field.

96. (New) A method of enabling a network information provider to update information relating to a search listing on a search result list generated by a computer network search engine, the method comprising:

maintaining an account database having at least one account record for each of a plurality of network information providers, said account record including

at least one search listing having a search term,

an account identifier, and

a bid amount chargeable to an account of the network information provider upon receipt of a retrieval request from a searcher for information relating to a search listing of the network information provider on a search result list;

receiving from a network information provider a change request for a search listing in the network information provider's account;

updating the search listing in the network information provider's account record in response to the change request; and

determining a position substantially in real time for the updated search listing in a search result list generated by the search engine in response to a search request received from a searcher using the computer network, where the search term of the updated search listing generates a match with the search request and the position of the updated search listing in the search result list is determined using the bid amount.

97. (New) The method of claim 96, where the search term of each search listing in the search result list generates a match with the search request.

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98. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein the search listings in the search result list are sorted in order of decreasing bid amount.

99. (New) The method of claim 98, further comprising assigning an ordinal rank value to each search listing in the search result list in order of decreasing bid amount, with the smallest rank value assigned to the search listing in the search result list having the highest bid amount, and the largest rank value assigned to the search listing having the lowest bid amount.

100. (New) The method of claim 98, further comprising:

determining creation time value for each search listing in the account database;

identifying search listings within a search result list having equivalent bid amounts; and

within a group of search listings within a search result list that have equivalent bid amounts, sorting the search listings in order from earliest to most recent creation time value.

101. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the account record further includes an account balance.

102. (New) The method of claim 101, wherein the account balance is positive.

103. (New) The method of claim 101, further comprising subtracting the bid amount from the account balance substantially in real time when a search listing is selected by the searcher from the search result list.

104. (New) The method of claim 101, where the search listing further comprises a web site title, a web site description, and a web site Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

105. (New) The method of claim 104, further comprising recording a retrieval request event substantially in real time when a search listing is selected by a remote searcher from the search result list.

106. (New) The method of claim 105, wherein the retrieval request event comprises an account identifier, and a bid amount.

107. (New) The method of claim 106, wherein the retrieval request event further comprises a search term.

108. (New) The method of claim 106, wherein the retrieval request event further comprises a web site URL.

109. (New) The method of claim 106, wherein the retrieval request event further comprises a rank value.

110. (New) The method of claim 106, further comprising applying a charge to an account balance, where the charge corresponds to a bid amount recorded in a retrieval request event having an account identifier that matches the account identifier corresponding to the account balance.

111. (New) A method of enabling a web site promoter using a computer network to update information relating to a search listing within a search result list generated by a search engine substantially in real time in response to a search request received from a remote computer over the computer network, the method comprising:

maintaining an account database having at least one account record for each of a plurality of web site promoters of the computer network, said account record including an account identifier, a bid amount chargeable to an account of the web site promoter upon receipt of a retrieval request from a searcher for information relating to a search listing of the web site promoter on a search result list, and at least one search listing having a search term;

providing the web site promoter with authenticated login access, wherein the web site promoter's login access permits the web site promoter to modify the web site promoter's account record;

modifying a search listing of the account record upon receiving a request from said web site promoter; and

generating a search result list comprised of search listings wherein the search term for each search listing generates a match with the search request, the search listings in the search result list arranged in an order corresponding to the bid amounts of the search listings.

112. (New) The method of claim 111, wherein the search result list further includes at least one search listing having a bid amount of zero.

113. (New) The method of claim 111, wherein the search result list further includes at least one search listing that is not included in the account database.

114. (New) The method of claim 111, wherein modifying the search listing of the account record upon receiving a request from the web site promoter is performed substantially in real time.

115. (New) The method of claim 111, wherein the search listing further includes a title, a description, and a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

116. (New) The method of claim 111, further comprising adding a search listing substantially in real time to an account record of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

117. (New) The method of claim 111, further comprising deleting a search listing substantially in real time from an account record of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

118. (New) The method of claim 111, wherein the account record further comprises an account balance.

119. (New) The method of claim 118, wherein the account balance is positive.

120. (New) The method of claim 118, further comprising adding substantially in real time a money amount to the account balance of the web site promoters upon receiving a request from the web site promoter.

121. (New) The method of claim 120, wherein the money amount has been verified by an external financial authorization network.

122. (New) The method of claim 111, wherein the search term and the search request each comprise at least one character string.

123. (New) The method of claim 111, further comprising generating an activity report for a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

124. (New) The method of claim 111, further comprising estimating a cost of a search listing for a specified time period upon receiving a request from a web site promoter.

125. (New) The method of claim 124, wherein the estimated cost of a search listing for the specified time period is calculated as a product of the current bid amount of the search listing and a projected number of times the search listing is selected by a searcher at a remote computer in a specified time period.

126. (New) The method of claim 111, wherein the bid amount of a web site promoter's search listing comprises a money amount that is deducted from the account balance of said web site promoter's account each time the search listing is selected by a remote searcher.

127. (New) The method of claim 111, wherein the search listings of the web site promoters in the search result list are sorted in decreasing order from highest to lowest bid amounts.

128. (New) The method of claim 127, wherein an ordinal rank value is assigned in ascending order to each search listing of the search result list in the sorted order starting at the search listing with the highest bid amount, which is assigned the smallest rank value, and ending with the search listing with the lowest bid amount, which is assigned the largest rank value.

129. (New) The method of claim 111, further comprising displaying data from the search result list at the remote computer.

130. (New) The method of claim 111, further comprising generating a search listing activity report.

131. (New) The method of claim 111, further comprising suggesting alternative search terms for the creation of new search listings upon the request of the web site promoter.

132. (New) The method of claim 111, wherein said computer network is the Internet.

133. (New) A method of operating a pay for placement web site, the method comprising:

maintaining a database searchable by a search engine, the database including a
plurality of search listings, each search listing being associated with an
Internet website, a search term and a bid amount, the bid amount
corresponding to a money amount chargeable to a web site promoter
each time the web site promoter's web site is referred by the search
engine;

receiving a search request from a searcher;

identifying search listings generating a match with the search request; and

recording account identification information for debiting accounts of web site
promoters associated with identified search listings by amounts
corresponding to the respective bid amounts for the identified search
listings.

134. (New) The method of claim 133 further comprising:

ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with
the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings.

135. (New) The method of claim 133 further comprising:

receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to retrieve information associated
with a selected search listing in the search result list; and

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debiting the account of the web site promoter associated with the selected search listing by the bid amount associated with the selected search listing.

REMARKS

This is a continuation application claiming priority of copending application serial number 09/322,677. By this paper, claims 1-68, allowed in parent application serial number 09/322,677, have been cancelled and new claims 69 - 135 have been submitted for examination. Claims 69-78 were submitted in the parent application and subsequently cancelled to obtain early allowance and issuance of the parent application as a patent. Claims 79-95 and 133-135 are newly submitted. Claims 96-132 generally track claims 15-51 of the parent application but use somewhat different language.

This application incorporates by reference the specification of parent application serial number 09/322,677, including the microfiche appendix filed therewith. The file wrapper for application serial number 09/322,677 is not currently available at the USPTO so a copy of the microfiche appendix can not be made. As soon as application serial number 09/322,677 issues as a US patent and the file wrapper is available, a copy of the microfiche appendix will be made and provided to the file of the present application.

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With this Amendment, the application is believed to be in condition for early action on the merits. Should the Examiner deem a telephone conference to be helpful in expediting examination and allowance of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number shown below.

Respectfully submitted,

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July 24, 2001

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